



SAN FRANCISCO OFFICE
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Project Number: 100029

To: Valerie Knepper, MTC

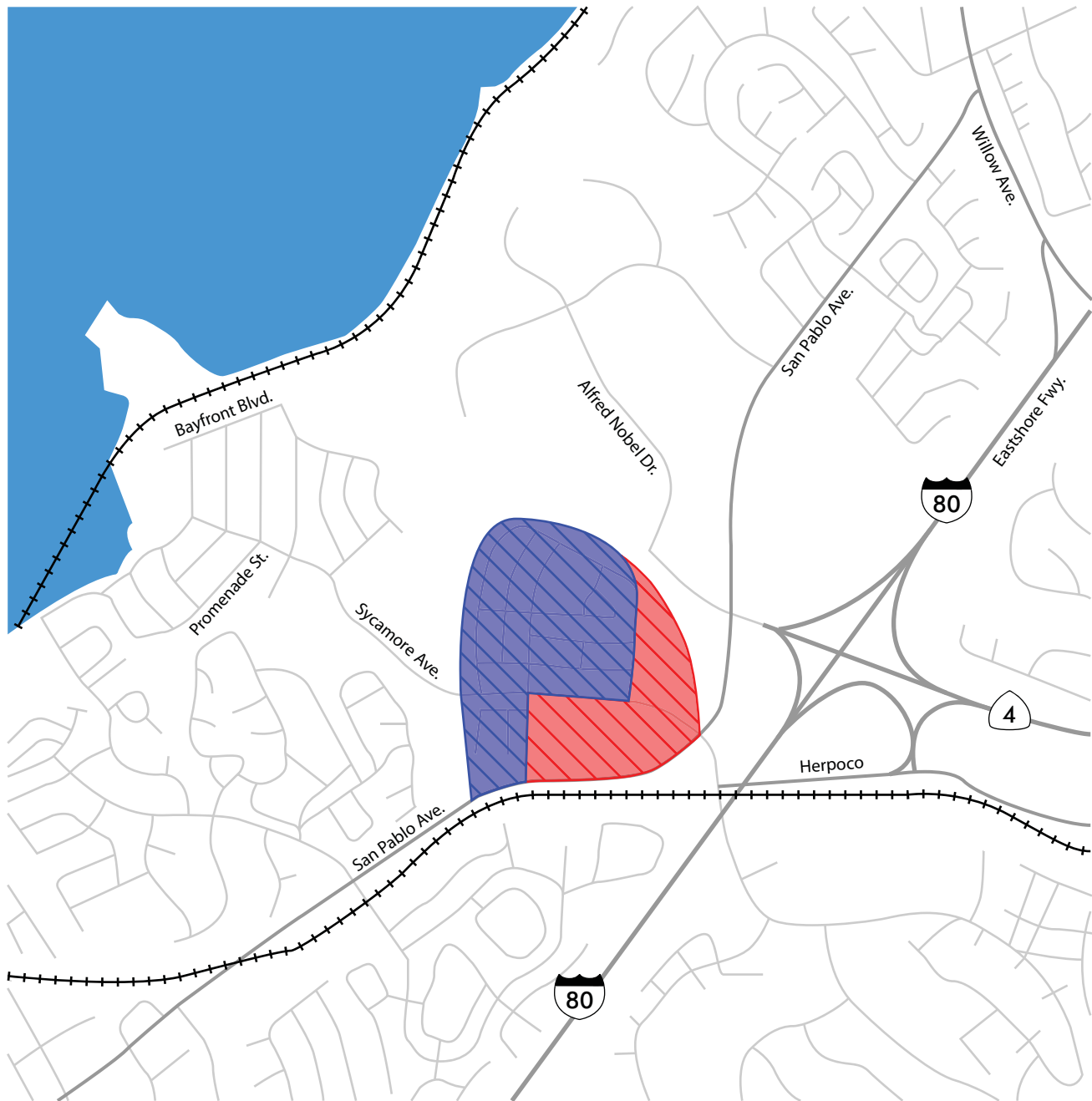
From: Bill Hurrell/Elizabeth Cruz

Subject: Summary of Findings, MTC Case Study: Hercules, Draft 3

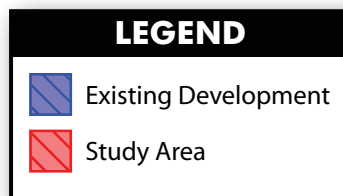
This memorandum presents a summary of findings regarding the City of Hercules' case study for the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's (MTC) *Reforming Parking Policies to Support Smart Growth Study*. This memorandum includes a review of existing Smart Growth supportive policies, a review of the initial implications, and makes preliminary recommendations based on analysis of the parking data obtained. This information provides a basis for a potential parking management plan for the City of Hercules Downtown Area.

EXISTING CONDITIONS

Currently, most of Hercules' Sycamore Development Area is yet to be developed. Figure 1 presents the location of the proposed study area which includes the Sycamore Development Area. Based on the purpose of the project and discussions with WSA Consultants, it was determined that data collection on the existing conditions would be of limited value. As such, this task would be best conducted after the completion of the project.



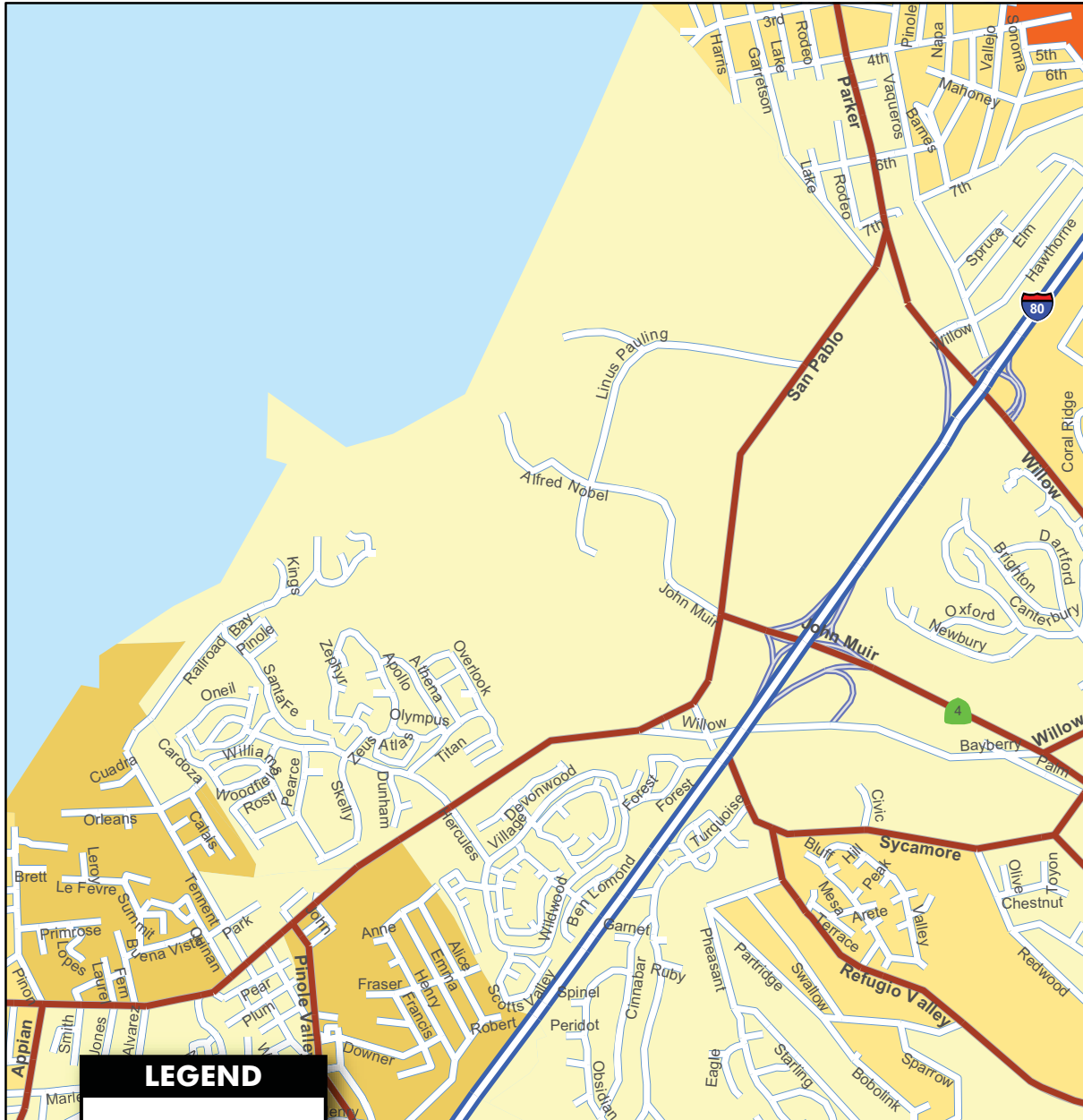
Source: City of Hercules



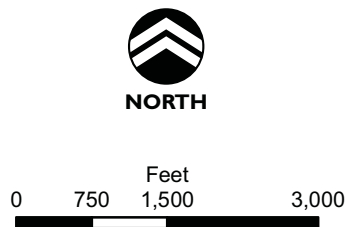
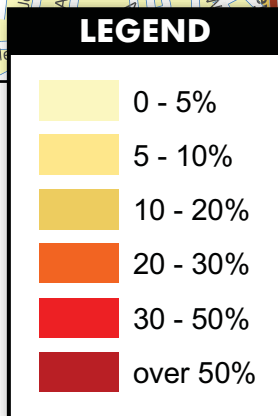
Mode Split and Car Ownership and Median Income

Journey to Work Data¹ obtained for the study area reveals that the majority of people, 89 percent, use their autos to reach work. Of these, 67 percent drove alone, while the remaining 22 percent carpool. The use of public transportation to work in the study area is significantly lower; totaling eight percent (five percent use BART, two percent use bus, and one percent use Amtrak). Approximately, one percent of people in the study area walk to work. This information is consistent with data which shows a relatively low number (zero to five percent) of zero auto households in the study area. Figure 2 indicates the breakdown of zero auto households in the study area.

¹ Census 2000, Journey to Work, Census Block 3591.01.



Source: MTC Analysis of 2005 BATS Data



With respect to income, the median household income within the study was reported at about \$57,150 while the median household income for the City of Hercules as a whole was higher, reported around \$75,200. The difference in income levels may be explained by the fact that within the study area there exist higher density development of which a portion is dedicated for lower income levels. Notably, these developments are located in the Civic Center area and are comprised of affordable apartments for seniors. As such the median for this area takes into account these income levels and thus has a lower median income overall.



Source: 2000 Census



NORTH

Feet
0 750 1,500 3,000

LAND USE AND ZONING

Hercules General Plan

The *Hercules General Plan* plays a central role in establishing the development guidelines of the City in a coherent and consistent manner. The Plan outlines the City's goals, policies, and programs to support the community's vision for future development. The city has closely followed the guidelines of the *General Plan* as it moves forward in developing key areas of the city. According to the *General Plan*, the city's future is envisioned as one which reflects a balanced community that recognizes its industrial past, takes into consideration its current and future housing, circulation, employment, retail needs, maintains economic viability, and preserves a high quality of life for its residents.

An important objective of the General Plan is the provision of affordable housing. In the Plan, the city recognizes the need to accommodate a variety of housing needs for its present and future citizenry. In response to these concerns, the *General Plan* presents a Five-Year Action Plan outlining the city's housing goals and policies. Developed to address the city's housing needs, resources, and constraints, the Plan focuses on the following aspects of housing: production and affordability, choice, provision of special needs housing, conservation, neighborhood quality, and provision equal opportunity housing. The overall objective, of the General Plan is to accomplish a "balanced mixture" of activities and uses. The city establishes that through its diversification of uses, it will be better able to accommodate the changes that it undergoes over time. This philosophy has been the city's focus as it moves to develop in new ways.

Under the direction of the General Plan, Hercules has systematically embarked on the developing prime land which previously had gone underutilized, notably in the Town Center, the Waterfront, and surrounding Neighborhoods. The impetus for this type of change stemmed from a collective desire to envision and re-invent the city as a place that can better serve the needs of the community and distinguishes itself from other cities through its sense of place. Accordingly, the citizens of Hercules along with their leaders have come together to establish specific policies that help articulate the alternative mode of development they have envisioned. The result of this vision is tangible as evidenced through the production of important city documents, notably, *The Central Hercules Plan*, *the Regulating Code for the Central Hercules Plan*, and *The Waterfront Master Plan*, that are currently being used as the basis for the development of these areas

Central Hercules Plan

The committed citizens, property owners, developers, and local officials of the City of Hercules gathered together in June of 2000 to discuss the ways in which the city was and would be developing in the future. Much of the impetus for this meeting came as a result of the citizenry's disconnect with the existing and proposed plans for development in the center of town. It became increasingly evident that in order to develop a successful Town Center Plan, the process would have to be inclusive of those stakeholders who were most affected and vocal about these changes. Based on this philosophy, the city sponsored a

charrette in which all interested parties were invited to voice their opinions on what they hoped their future town would look like. After an intense set of meetings and presentations, designers in close consultation with city officials, property owners, and affected agencies, continued to refine the Master Plan.

The development of the Central Hercules Plan came as a result of the willingness and combined efforts of the local government, developers, and citizens to engage and include one another in the development process. The main intention for the Center Hercules Plan is to use traditional urbanism to weave together the urban fabric and create new quarters and connections within the City of Hercules. The Plan in many ways is a sketch of the city's existing framework which documents current conditions, identifies areas for future development, and defines the urban design principles most appropriate to support the type of desired development.

The Plan specifically discusses the fundamental elements in the development of the "heart of the City", the Town Center. The city first establishes its working definition of what constitutes a Town Center by declaring that it is a fine grained place where one can buy and sell things, live, work, and enjoy civic life. The city however recognizes that in order to enable these processes to occur, certain design elements must be in place. As such, the Plan focuses on development guidelines, regulating land uses, promoting legibility,² and increasing mobility, walkability, and connectivity between spaces.

A review of current conditions uncovered a significant amount of vacant and/or underutilized land in key areas of Central Hercules where the potential for development had previously been significantly ignored. The areas of focus include: *the Waterfront Neighborhood, the Central Quarter, the Hill Town, and the Civic Center/Hospitality Corridor*. The following section presents a brief description of each of the focus areas including their existing conditions and their potential to develop in ways that are in keeping with the goals outlined in the General Plan.

Waterfront District

The San Pablo Bay Waterfront was once home to the Hercules Powder Company and has been disconnected from the rest of the community for some time. As a former brownfield³, the land has been sold to the Bixby Company which has developed a Master Plan for the area. The Plan aims to introduce a mix and variety of housing types, civic buildings, offices, restaurants, and retail stores.

Existing Conditions

The Bixby Company has begun the development process in the Waterfront District. The Historic Center and Bayfront Neighborhoods are well into the design phase of their individual projects and the Company is moving forward with plans to develop a small

² In his book *The Image of The City*, Kevin Lynch defines legibility as the ease with which its parts may be recognized and can be organized into a coherent pattern. (Lynch, 60)

³ Environmental Protection Agency: A site whose expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant

residential place within the Refugio Neighborhood. Additionally, the construction of housing in the Promenade Residential Neighborhood is underway and sales for these units are continuing.

Identified Potential

The Plan seeks to distinguish the Waterfront from the remainder of the Town Center by featuring the small stores and restaurants there, as well as developing the area as a key destination by providing a mix of uses including apparel stores, galleries, and day spas. Additionally, the Waterfront is also proposed to provide a wider variety of housing notably smaller and more affordable households. This type of development will compliment (as opposed to compete with) the other retail areas in Hercules that serve as regional destinations.

As the waterfront continues to grow and develop, it will become necessary to offer additional options for travel. Not only will these options for travel be centered on travel within the neighborhood through increased walkability and bicycling but will also address travel to areas outside Contra Costa County. It is expected that in the future, the Capitol Corridor train serving Sacramento and San Jose will add a stop at the station located in Hercules, allowing commuter connections to both San Jose and San Francisco with transfers in Oakland to BART.

As previously mentioned, the Waterfront has suffered tremendously over the years as a result of being disconnected with the rest of the Town Center. As such, the Waterfront District Master Plan addresses issues of increased connectivity between these two areas. The Plan proposed to open up the Waterfront by continuing to use the Bay Trail across the land allowing public access to the Point. A more detailed discussion about the Waterfront Master Plan will follow.

The Central Quarter

Encompassing the area around San Pablo Avenue and Sycamore Avenue, the Central Quarter is strategically located at the crossroads of two major thoroughfares that form a key transportation node for the city. Regionally, San Pablo is a major arterial that links people from towns across Western Contra Costa County, while locally, San Pablo Avenue acts as the gateway into and out of Hercules.

Existing Conditions

At present, the area is predominately focused on accommodating automobile uses and is defined by wide travel lanes, auto-oriented uses such as a gas station, a fast-food restaurant, and the BART park-and-ride lot. The land itself is a mix of wetlands and “brownfields” that remain from the former Hercules Powder Factory and those associated with Refugio Creek.

Identified Potential

There is great potential to develop these sites and increase the sense of place in the Central Quarter. The BART park- and ride-lot currently operates at capacity which

attests to the needs of commuters who utilize it. However, the lot is situated on valuable land in the city center which would be better utilized by a mixed-use building that would allow for retail, office and residential uses. The gas station could be maintained and phased in with new development by tucking it within the lot and lining its outer edges with another mixed-use building. In this way, the gas station would be accommodated through an alley, lowering the impact on pedestrians and contributing to a more continuous street frontage.

The Hill Town

As its name suggests, the Hill Town area is located on top of a hill overlooking the San Pablo Bay. The hill is particularly prominent from Interstate 80 and has the potential to be the city's unique landmark.

Existing Conditions

The hill currently plays host to a series of tanks one used to serve an oil pipeline used to power plants in eastern Contra Costa County. The "Tank Farm" as it is often referred to, has a steep topography which makes the site difficult to develop but the City of Hercules plans to use the area's perceived constraints as opportunities to enhance development.

Identified Potential

By taking into consideration the site's characteristics, notably, topography, climate, size, and density, development will be tailored to accommodate these features. Development can take place on either side of the "steps" that define the hill and host office, residential or retail uses. Traffic can then circulate along the road that rings the development and parking can be tucked away to allow maximum development of the terrain. By tucking away the parking, the area supports a pedestrian-friendly environment and allows buildings to be closer to the street.

The Civic Center

City Hall is separated and disconnected from the surrounding neighborhoods as it resides on top of a hill.

Existing Conditions

For the most part, the Bayberry Avenue area is undeveloped with the exceptions of a Caltrans staging area. The current road alignment forces all traffic in Hercules to pass through the intersection of Bayberry and Sycamore Avenues. In addition, the intersection has all but been abandoned by pedestrians and many cyclists due to the layering of transportation corridors, the interstate and railroad. Many of the remaining parcels of land have been relegated as "lost space."

Identified Potential

There is opportunity to accommodate a BART park-and-ride lot, currently located in the Central Quarter with a parking garage in the Civic Center. A garage would act as a transit center for Wescat and BART. Additionally, an increased number of commuters will be able to take advantage of transit to reach their destinations. The development of the new parking garage should be sure to use "liner buildings" that provide retail, offices,

or residential uses. Notably, retail uses should be designed and positioned to intercept riders before they reached their parked cars.

To further establish the character of this area, a hotel is proposed to act as an anchor for the neighborhood. The realignment of Bayberry Avenue will allow for buildings to be built on both sides of the street and therefore accommodate multi-story buildings with storefronts on the first floor and other uses above.

Regulating Code for the Central Hercules Plan

Developed in conjunction with the Central Hercules Plan, the Regulating Code is a complementary document that provides specific guidelines for site design and district strategies. The Code distinguishes itself from other documents in the ways it prescribes the use of regulating plans to tailor street and lot patterns to the surrounding context, the use of building placement standards to specify parameters that govern building location, form, and size, and the use of graphic representations (drawings, photographs, etc) to illustrate the established concepts. As such, the Code helps thoroughly articulate the city and Community's vision for the growth and regulation of development within the Town Center.

The key organizing element of the Regulating Code is based on a hierarchical street classes designed to providing guidelines for development to follow along these identified streets. Accordingly, the City has characterized each of the streets in the network with respect to traffic accommodations, allowable building volumes, and building placement. The network designates Avenues to have the highest priority, followed by the Main Street, Town Center Streets, Neighborhood Streets, Neighborhood Lanes, and Edge Drives. Within the category of Avenues, a distinction is made between Four-Lane Avenues, designed for areas where the movement of larger volumes of traffic is desired, and Two-Lane Avenues where wide medians and street streets make them more suitable for residential and office uses. The Main Street is designed to encourage walkability through pedestrian scale, presence of mixed-use shops, and the use of narrower proportions to create a better sense of spatial definition.

Town Center Streets are intended to create safe inviting places for both pedestrians and motorists to share and enjoy. Parallel parking and wide sidewalks on both sides of the street help to create a comfortable and safe walking environment for pedestrians. Buildings are built to the lot line to create inviting high-transparency store frontages. Additionally, cyclists are also increasingly accommodated by Town Center Streets through the provision of bike lanes on both sides of the street. Neighborhood Streets are designed with traffic calming in mind and are used in primarily residential areas or as secondary streets and offer on-street parking on one-side of the street. Drives provide access around the boundaries of the Central Quarter area. One-Way Edge Drives is a very narrow street that is primarily used around the edges of open spaces (i.e. neighborhood squares and parks). They are intended to provide a layer of on-street parking to uses facing open spaces and are easy for pedestrians to use.

The Regulating Code goes on present a set of modified parking requirements for Central Hercules. The new requirements tend to reflect the characteristics of the area; pedestrian oriented, higher density, and increased transit opportunities. Table 1 provides a comparison between the general parking requirements applied in the rest of the city and the revised requirements for Central Hercules.

Table 1 General and Central Hercules Parking Requirements			
Use	Unit	Zoning Ordinance Requirement	Regulating Code Requirement
Residential			1.25 spaces
Single Family	Dwelling Unit	2.0 spaces	
Multi-Family	Dwelling Unit	1.5 spaces	
Retail			2.5 spaces
Convenience	1,000 Square Feet	4.0 spaces	
Retail stores/ sales	1,000 Square Feet	3.5 spaces	
Office			3.3 spaces
Professional	1,000 Square Feet	3.0 spaces	
General	1,000 Square Feet	3.0 spaces	

Source: Regulating Code for Central Hercules Plan

The revisions of the City's parking requirements, the Regulating Code encourages development to explore shared parking opportunities. Required parking minimums can be reduced by up to fifty (50) percent with a shared parking solution approved by the CPDS. The Code also makes recommendations regarding the treatment of off-street surface parking lots. The Code makes specific recommendations about the placement of and access to off-street parking lots. It states parking lots are to be located behind buildings and made accessible by alleys. Alleys can be incorporated into parking lots as standard drive. Access to properties adjacent to the alleys should be maintained and access between parking lots across property lines is also encouraged. The overall objective of these guidelines is to preserve a continuous street frontage by prohibiting street fronting parking lots that would act to disrupt this goal.

Other ways the Regulating Code was worked to further facilitate the development process is by placing a greater emphasis on administrative review and approval authority for new developments that meet the requirements outlined in the Code. At the same time, the Code also allows opportunity for appeal procedures through a review by the Town Architect, Planning Commission, and City Council. The city's efforts to provide greater flexibility and streamline the development review process through the implementation of the Regulating Code is in keeping with its goals to promote a greater variety of housing types and degrees of affordability.

The success of the city's current redevelopment can be largely attributed to the implementation/adoption of the aforementioned plans. The *Regulating Code for the*

Central Hercules Plans has been particularly instrumental in enabling development approval by greatly streamlining the review process. By clearly presenting the development guidelines and requirements, the application as well as the review process for these types of development can be increasingly approved administratively. This type of framework has multiple benefits; (1) specific guidelines help communicate the relationship of development characteristics of buildings to the surrounding urban context, (2) the amount of time spent on reviewing each development is significantly reduced as previously laborious tasks become highly administrative and (3) the expenses incurred spent on a particularly project is efficiently reduced.

Many of the city's goals are being achieved through the implementation of the Central Hercules Plan and the Regulating Code. The Waterfront Master Plan is also playing a highly complimentary part in the meeting of those established goals by working together in fostering synergistic relationships between adjoining areas of development.

Waterfront District Master Plan

In keeping with the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance, the land within the HPI encompassing the Waterfront District shall be developed as master planned and integrated community. Notably, key elements that are emphasized as part of the purposes set forth in the preceding documents include:

- Provide a location for commuter rail station with adjacent mixed-use development;
- Provide the opportunity to accommodate both residential and commercial uses in a well-planned, mixed-use development ;
- Allow lower cost live-work opportunities for start-up business that are compatible with the residential and commercial uses within the district; and
- Provide the opportunity for upper floor residential uses over ground floor commercial uses.

The Waterfront Master Plan is composed of two key elements, the Circulation Master Plan which fixes the location and design of all public ways within the District, and the Open Space Master Plan, fixes the location and design of parks, greens, plazas, and trails within the District. The Master Plan (like the Central Hercules Plan) also had a Code which defines the manner in which lots within the blocks may be developed. The Code includes a Regulating Plan, Urban Regulations, Architectural Regulations, and Landscape Regulations.

The Code

The intent of the Waterfront District is to encourage and direct the development in the District so that the goals of the City of Hercules General Plan and the purposes of the Zoning Ordinance are achieved. There are key objectives that the District has outlined for itself, including:

- Commercial and flexible-use buildings be developed along specific street frontages to create lively, pedestrian oriented public space;
- The needs of the automobile be accommodated but not at the expense of the needs of the pedestrian; and
- The permitting process be simplified and facilitated to encourage realization of the Plan.

The Code achieves these objectives by defining the appearance and quality of the public realm and the places created by buildings. As the code prescribes specific building heights, bulk, façade treatments, the location of parking, and the relationship of the buildings to the street and one another, it creates the community envisioned by its citizenry.

The Vision

The Master Plan concept is intended to implement the mixed-use district called for by the General Plan and Zoning Ordinance, where the Waterfront District Master Plan organizes development within its boundaries as a traditional neighborhood and several distinct mixed-use sub-districts. Key elements giving shape to the Plan are the Circulation Master Plan and The Code.

Circulation Master Plan

The framework of the District Master Plan is based on the street system. Key considerations for the Master Plan are given to the following issues:

- Promote safe and well-designed neighborhoods and encourage new residential development to have an internal circulation system including pedestrian walkways, bikeways, and access to transit facilities; and
- Residential streets should be designated in relation to needed capacity and the adjoining housing patterns, while discouraging through traffic on local streets.

Based on these considerations, the circulation system for the District has been developed as a fully inter-connected network of pedestrian-oriented thoroughfares. Tailored and specific development guidelines for each type of thoroughfare help ensure that safe and pleasant pedestrian ways are incorporated. Additionally, the Plan provides on-street parking to encourage motorists to become pedestrians within the District. The amount of as well as the configuration of parking is provided to support the adjacent land uses.

Similar to the *Central Hercules Plan*, the *Waterfront District Plan* is also organized by its distinct set of streets. The streets within the Waterfront are described in terms of their defining characteristics, notably, their intended purpose. They include:

Sycamore Avenue – As the primary north-south street of the City, Sycamore Avenue passes through the City's primary retail district and the Civic Center complex as it traverses through the City's northern neighborhoods. The design of Sycamore Avenue

within this particular portion of the District is that of a road passing through a natural open space.

Railroad and Sycamore Avenues – These particular avenues provide access into the neighborhood. They have been designed to provide convenient and safe vehicular and pedestrian access through the Neighborhood and to and from adjoining neighborhoods and districts.

Neighborhood Streets – Are considered to be the heart of public space within the Neighborhood. They are intended to provide convenient and safe vehicular and pedestrian access through the Neighborhood and to and from adjoining neighborhoods and districts.

Valleyview Terrace – Is a single-loaded neighborhood street that is generally parallel to Sycamore Avenue. The easterly side of the street which has no lots abutting it, is intended to be developed as the prime pedestrian way connecting the Bayfront District to the north and to Duck Pond Trail to the south. In this way, Valleyview Terrace will provide pedestrians access from the Bay to the Park and along the existing Duck Pond Trail without having to walk along Sycamore Avenue.

Neighborhood Lanes – Neighborhood lanes are designed to provide vehicular access to the rear lots, freeing the facades of garage doors and driveways. As such, they provide direct access to second residential units that are permitted within outbuildings and allow development of residences on narrower lots than would be permitted if garages were accessed from the street.

Midblock Lanes – Reduce the required walking distance within the Neighborhood, and to and from the Town Center District to the north.

Neighborhood Edge Alleys – Help define the north edge of the Neighborhood. They are designed to provide convenient bicycle and pedestrian access and from the residences to the shops and offices along Bayfront Boulevard. Midblock passages are also recommended along Bayfront to provide direct access to pedestrians.

Parking access to for mixed-use buildings within the Bayfront District will be located on the north side of the alleys and outdoor on-site parking will be provided on the south side of the alley. The neighboring lots of the Neighborhood will be placed at a higher elevation than the parking areas to minimize the impacts of the alley parking on adjacent districts.

Bayfront Boulevard – As detailed in the Plan, Bayfront Boulevard is planned to connect the northerly terminus of Sycamore Avenue to Railroad Avenue and the Historic Town Center. In the future, Bayfront Boulevard will also provide access to the forthcoming Amtrak station and other uses to the east of Sycamore.

The boulevard will be developed keeping its urban nature in mind given its surrounding context of multi-story mixed use buildings. However, the boulevard will be sure to provide convenient access to the neighborhood streets to the south. Additionally, the provision of wide sidewalks will help to accommodate high volumes of pedestrian traffic as well as sidewalk dining, and other business related uses.

Urban Regulations

Based on the General Plan and the Zoning Ordinance, the District is intended to be developed as a true mixed-use district with a range of office, retail, live-work, and residential uses mixed together in a historic town pattern. Accordingly, flexible allowable uses have been adopted as the City recognizes the dynamic nature of the district and the inevitable modifications that uses will go through to reflect these changes.

The Regulating Plan for the Waterfront District prescribes the allowable building types as well as the development guidelines they must follow. Along with the Circulation and Open Space Master Plans, the Waterfront is envisioned as a cohesive District composed of several distinct sub-areas that are seamlessly connected to one another by District thoroughfares.

The first of the sub-areas is the single family Neighborhood where the only type of buildings allowed is Type I. Generally, buildings included in this category range from one to two story homes intended to serve narrow to wide lots and accommodate garage access from a lane or drive located at the rear of the lot. The Urban Regulations are only currently available for the single family neighborhood, future revisions of the Waterfront District Master Plan will include regulations for other planning subareas including the Historic Town Center, and the Bayfront District.

Architectural Regulations

The Architectural Regulations outlined as part of the Waterfront District Master Plan is to prescribe the types of desired buildings and styles for development which is to occur within this District. The styles identified within the document are intended to illustrate designs characteristic to the Bay Area variations on three classic American Styles, Italianate, Victorian, and Craftsman. Additional requirements for the homes and buildings to be included within the District, is that they be made authentic as possible with the specific building materials described in the document. These materials include, wood, brick, smooth plaster, stone, tile slate, and naturally weathering metals.

Existing Relevant Policies

A review of the City of Hercules' General Plan, Central Hercules Plan, Regulating Code, Zoning Ordinance, and Waterfront District Master Plan has identified the following goals and parking policies that contribute to or hinder Smart Growth for the City. The policies were evaluated according to the Smart Growth principles they help illustrate, including:

- Density
- Connectivity/Walkability/Livability
- Transit/Mode Choice
- Convenience/Ease of Use
- Progressive Financing/Pricing
- Overall/Overarching Benefits

GENERAL PLAN

Objective 2: Develop a community that balances housing, jobs, and commercial opportunities

Policy 2A: Commercial and industrial development shall be consistent with gross intensity changes in the Land Use Diagram and Land Use Categories.

Program 2A.1 – The Zoning Ordinance shall be updated and amended to incorporate the new density standards into the commercial and industrial zoning districts.

Smart Growth Benefits: Density

Policy 2B: Develop non-residential Land Use Categories which reduce the need for residents to leave the community by providing a variety of shopping and service opportunities (mixed-use)

Program 2B.1 – Target selected retail, service and employment opportunities that will meet the needs of the residents and develop a marketing program to attract these targeted opportunities

Smart Growth Benefits: Density

Objective 3: Ensure the provision of public facilities and services needed to support growth that balances jobs, commercial, and housing opportunities, and also protects quality of life in the community.

Policy 3A: Develop transportation facilities to provide access to the region, particularly public transit systems (buses, ride sharing, rail transit, as well as potential over-water transit).

Program 3A.1 – Provide assistance and support a regional rail transit system and seek funding for a train station in Hercules

Program 3A.2 – Work with WESTCAT to develop both short-term and long-term transit facility uses on the WESTCAT site in Hercules including commercial-retail uses or rail line extensions.

Smart Growth Benefits: Transit/Mode Choice

Policy 3D: Create a strong and successful focus or center for business and activities that would provide services, shopping opportunities which would attract employees, clients, and patrons from a regional area, while not disturbing existing residential and community oriented areas.

Program 3D.1 – The City will implement its adopted Economic Development Strategy to attract businesses and development that will provide needed services, shopping, and employment.

Smart Growth Benefit: Connectivity/Livability/Walkability

Objective 5: Develop and maintain a pattern of residential land uses which provide for a variety and balance of densities and opportunities for a mix of dwelling and residential type.

Policy 5A: Residential development shall be consistent with gross density ranges in the Land Use Categories and with the Land Use Diagram

Program 5A.1 – The Zoning Ordinance shall be updated and amended to incorporate the new density standards into the residential zoning districts and site-specific consideration standards for Planned Development Plans. The standards for development within the corresponding residential zoning districts shall address the preference for mid-range densities while balancing the equal goals of architectural diversity and economic variety.

Smart Growth Benefit: Density, Livability

Policy 5C: Provide additional affordable and/or senior citizen housing.

Program 5C.1 – Develop an affordable housing strategy which includes an inclusionary requirement of providing a minimum of 10% of the total residential units for affordable housing, an implementation plan and financial and non-financial incentives for the development of such housing.

Smart Growth Benefit: Density

Circulation Element

The basic objectives of the Circulation Element are to; provide for the movement of people and commodities in the City and Plan for the preservation and enhancement of visual qualities as viewed from designated scenic routes. Notably, under these two global objectives, the City identifies the following subgoals:

- Coordinate the street system with land use and other elements of the General Plan
- Unify the City with a functional internal street system of arterials, collectors, and local streets
- Provide adequate access from the freeways to the surface street system
- Coordinate the City's street system with adjoining city, county, and state facilities
- Minimize through traffic in residential neighborhoods
- Promote public transit service within the City and area
- Provide a comprehensive system of riding and hiking trails

Policies

- E. The City shall actively participate in cooperative efforts to provide effective public transit to the City and adjacent communities, including promoting a commuter rail station of BART at the City and a train station along San Pablo Bay within the Lower Refugio Valley serving the Capitol Corridor to intercept through travelers on I-80.

Smart Growth Benefit: Transit/Mode Choice

- F. The City should promote the establishment of riding and hiking trails throughout the community and coordinate with other agencies planning trail systems in the area and region.

Smart Growth Benefit: Transit/Mode Choice

Housing Element

With respect to housing, the City of Hercules is committed to increasing the number of affordable housing units, creating a more varied housing stock in terms of type and price, improving the quality of existing housing, and maintain the quality of existing neighborhoods and encourage the development of new neighborhoods. These objectives are illustrated in the General Plan's Housing Element.

Goal 2: Housing Choice

Provide a selection of housing by type, tenure, and price.

Policy 2.1 Diversity of Housing Types, Densities, and Price Levels – Provide well-designed, well-built housing units for low- and moderate-income households in mixed-density developments, including Planned Unit Development, avoiding a concentration in any limited area

Policy 2.2 Rental Housing Opportunities – Expand the number of rental units for those who cannot afford to purchase or who chose to rent.

Smart Growth Benefits: Density

Goal 5: Maintain the quality of existing neighborhoods and encourage the development of attractive, viable new neighborhoods.

Policy 5.1 Mixed Use – Where appropriate, encourage residential uses in commercial areas, and limited commercial uses in residential areas to promote access to services.

Policy 5.2 Circulation and Pedestrian-Oriented – Design new residential areas to avoid conflict with major streets or thoroughfares, to have access to transit facilities, and to encourage safe and convenient alternatives to the private auto.

Smart Growth Benefit: Connectivity/Walkability/Livability

REGULATING CODE FOR CENTRAL HERCULES PLAN

Parking Requirements

Minimum parking requirements in the Hercules Central District are as follows:

1.25 spaces/ dwelling unit

1 space / 400 sf of retail

1 space / 300 sf of office

Shared parking solutions are encouraged. Required parking minimums can be reduced by up to 50 % with a shared parking solution approved by the CDPS.

Smart Growth Benefit: Density

Access to Off-Street Parking

Alleys shall be the primary source of access to off-street parking. Alleys may be incorporated into parking lots as standard drive aisles. Access to all properties adjacent to the alley shall be maintained. Access between parking lots across property lines is also encouraged.

Sycamore Downtown Parking Management Plan

As part of the City's redevelopment program, Hercules has initiated its Sycamore Downtown project which presents great opportunities to pursue dense mixed-use development as well as explore transit supportive policies. To this end, the City recently completed a Parking and Transportation Demand Management plan for the Sycamore Downtown whose focus centers on reduced vehicle travel, increased use of transit as well as other forms of non-motorized modes of travel.

Based on a shared parking analysis, the Plan makes the following recommendations for the Sycamore Downtown:

Pursue a "Park Once" strategy

Make efficient use of the parking supply by including as many spaces as possible in a common pool of shared, publicly available spaces. Specifically, the parking supply for the retail, office and residential users should be shared, with the following exception: residents and employees who are willing to pay a premium for exclusive, assigned spaces should be allowed to do so. Residents of market rate units are most likely to take advantage of this option. For purposes of projecting parking demand, the following analysis assumes that the parking for all of the retail, office and below market rate residential units will be shared, while all market rate units will take advantage of the option of designated spaces.

Create a Commercial Parking Benefit District.

To create vacancies and turnover of the most convenient "front door" curb parking spaces, install multi-space parking meters along Sycamore Avenue and the adjacent portions of Front Street and Tsushima. Set parking prices at rates that create a 15% vacancy rate on each block, and do not institute time limits. (Note that in the initial years of the project, if parking demand is low, setting meter rates that provide the first hour or 90 minutes free of charge may be sufficient to create a 15% vacancy rate.) Dedicate all resulting meter revenue to public improvements for Sycamore Downtown.

Provide subsidized short-term parking for customers

In the first years of the project, when the Penterra development may not yet be complete and other nearby neighborhoods not yet fully built, storefronts on Sycamore may need every possible advantage to compete with nearby conventional retail. Initially, therefore, short-term parking rates for Sycamore Downtown's underground garage should provide an hour or 90 minutes of free parking, with a fee thereafter to keep employees from occupying customer spaces all day.

Charge for parking separately from the cost of residential space

For all residential units, the full cost of providing parking should be "unbundled" from the cost of the housing itself, by creating a separate parking charge. Currently, the project architects estimate that the underground parking spaces proposed for Sycamore downtown will have a construction cost of approximately \$55,000 per space. This translates to an annualized cost of almost \$350 per space per month. Unbundling this large cost will change parking in downtown Sycamore from a required purchase to an optional amenity, so that residents can freely choose how many spaces they wish to lease. For lower income residents, many of whom have no car or only one car, this will provide substantial savings. Charging separately for parking is also the single most effective strategy to encourage households to own fewer cars. Designated parking spaces should be leased for a rate which covers the full cost to build and operate the space (i.e., \$350 per month, based on current estimates), whereas shared parking spaces should be leased to residents at a discount.

Separate the cost of leasing employee parking from the cost of commercial space.

Retail tenants will need employee parking spaces. As with parking for residential units, the full cost of providing these employee spaces should be unbundled from the cost of leasing commercial space, providing employers with a strong financial incentive to participate in transportation demand management programs that will reduce employee parking demand. As with residential, designated parking spaces should be leased at a rate which covers the full cost to build and operate the space (i.e., \$350 per month), whereas shared parking spaces should be leased to businesses at a discount.

Require parking cash out

Many employers in Sycamore Downtown are likely to wish to provide free parking for their employees as a fringe benefit. Employers should be allowed to do so, *provided that they also offer the cash value of the parking subsidy (i.e., \$350 per month) to any employee who does not drive to work*. Such "parking cash out" programs provide an equal transportation subsidy to employees who ride transit, carpool, walk or bicycle to work. A primary benefit of parking cash out programs is their proven effect on reducing auto congestion and parking demand.

Establish a Residential Parking Benefit District

To prevent unwanted spillover parking into the neighborhoods adjacent to Sycamore Downtown, implement a residential parking benefit district for these neighborhoods. Many cities implement residential permit districts (also known as preferential parking

districts) by reserving onstreet parking spaces for residents only, usually issuing permits for free or a nominal fee. Residential Parking Benefit Districts are similar, but also allow a limited number of commuters to pay to use any surplus on-street parking spaces in the neighborhood. The resulting revenue is returned to the neighborhood to fund public improvements.

Provide Universal Transit Passes

A universal transit pass program would provide all residents and employees of Sycamore Downtown with a free-of-charge transit pass for unlimited rides on WestCat buses. Universal transit pass programs, such as the Ecopass program created by Santa Clara County's Valley Transportation Authority, allow annual passes to be purchased at a deeply discounted bulk rate for all members of a specified group, such as all of a firm's employees, or all of the residents of an apartment complex. Negotiating with WestCat a similar program for Sycamore Downtown will benefit both employees and residents, and cost-effectively reduce parking demand.

Institute additional supportive transportation demand management measures.

Provide and actively market additional measures to support alternative transportation, such as a Guaranteed Ride Home program, and a transportation information package for new employees and residents.

Provide bicycle parking

Provide both bicycle racks for short-term parking, and secure, fully-enclosed long-term bicycle parking for residents and employees.

Establish a car sharing program

Contract with a local car sharing provider, such as City Carshare, FlexCar or ZipCar to provide one or more car sharing vehicles in Sycamore Downtown. Car sharing makes a common fleet of vehicles available to members for rental by the hour or by the day, and can be an important tool to reduce parking demand.

SMART GROWTH PARKING

Goals

The City of Hercules has several goals that they want to achieve as a part of Smart Growth Parking study:

- Investigate parking policies and local financial investments regarding the City's town center and transit hubs;
- Accommodating and managing mobility and circulation through the City's approval process;
- Administering and funding appropriate parking supplies as new development occurs; and

- Develop recommendations for Smart Growth parking management guidelines for Sycamore Downtown and, as warranted, draw general recommendations and guidance for other future development.

Implications for Smart Growth

The City of Hercules has several smart growth policies developed as part of its General Plan, Redevelopment Plan, and Zoning Ordinance. Based on the City's goals, there is still potential for improvement using other innovative smart growth policies and programs which have been implemented in communities throughout the Bay Area and the United States. The following section presents a range of parking policies and programs that present unique opportunities for the City of Hercules to learn from and implement.

RECOMMENDED SMART GROWTH PARKING STRATEGIES

The following policies and programs are suggested for more discussion. It should be noted that the recommended policies and programs identified are to be considered and phased in with the upcoming development in the Sycamore commercial area.

The following are suggested for further discussion:

Non-motorized Connectivity

The City of Hercules highlights the importance of fostering connectivity through its policies included the Plan for Central Hercules and the Waterfront Master Plan. Notably, one of its key aims is to develop new residential development to have an internal circulation system including pedestrian walkways, bikeways, and access to transit facilities. Based on the first phase of residential development the opportunity exists to make an example of the type of desired connectivity that is outlined in the Plan. As such, the City should reinforce their existing policies and programs to enhance non-motorized connectivity within the Sycamore commercial district. Additionally, the City should focus on enhancing non-motorized connectivity between the North Shore Business Park and the Waterfront and Sycamore commercial areas.

The Plan for Central Hercules makes many design guideline recommendations within the Central Quarter (encompassing the Sycamore commercial area) that when taken together create a network of interconnected streets. The streets are proposed to create small blocks that are comfortable and invite residents and visitors to make multiple errands that are within walking distance. One example of many funding sources available for these types of improvements include federal funding provided through MTC's Transportation for Livable Communities (TLC). Enhancements include but are not limited to:

- Connections between the commercial district and the transit (i.e. BART park-and-ride lot)
- Bike lanes and bicycle parking amenities.
- Pedestrian amenities such as: wider sidewalks, pedestrian scaled lighting, seating, street trees, enhanced crosswalks to encourage walkability.

Parking Management Plan

Based on the proposed development of the Sycamore commercial area, the projected development should be required to coordinate with a comprehensive parking management for the commercial area. A comprehensive parking management plan should be considered which:

- allocate appropriate amounts of parking to different users (e.g. residents, visitors, employees)
 - on-street (short term parking)
 - off-street employee parking, satellite parking and shuttle
- to manages demand, availability
 - prices parking according to peak time and location

Parking District

The City of Hercules has laid much of the initial foundation in establishing the Central Quarter of town as a vibrant retail and commercial center. Adequately sized and scaled sidewalks, on-street parking, and attractive storefronts will invariably act as key elements contributing to the area's success. As such, the potential exists to establish a Parking District that will enable the City to meet these goals.

Parking Districts are areas where the fees are collected and used to fund improvements to enhance parking conditions in a defined area. Such a district could be implemented in the Sycamore commercial area. The parking district would be managed in one of two ways:

- **Assessment** - New development would be assessed fees in the form of taxes or in-lieu fees. The funds could then be used for district improvements, parking structure, etc.
- **Benefit** – Revenue would be collected from on-street parking meters and would be used to improve lighting, provide regularly scheduled street sweeping, sidewalk cleaning, lighting enhancements, security or some other amenities agreed to between business organizations and the City.

Shared Parking

The city currently encourages shared parking solutions and allows reductions of up to 50 percent for required parking minimums. Existing policy can be revised to be more progressive by actively promoting complimentary uses where patrons will park once and visit multiple stores (such as retail and office). Co-locating weekday uses (offices) with weekend uses (i.e. churches) will also help to promote shared parking.

Parking Cash Out

In an effort to promote transit use, large businesses should consider providing their employees with a parking cash out option where employees who do not drive are paid the cost of that parking spot per month. Additionally, such a parking cash out program can

be used to provide a transportation subsidies to employees who ride transit, carpool or use non-motorized modes to reach work.

Residential Permit Program (RPP)

In addition to policies aimed at off-street parking in the commercial district, a Residential Parking Permit Program should also be explored. An RPP would help ensure that parking is preserved for residents. Areas adjacent to the town center would be good candidates for renting residential street spaces during the day with pay and display technology.

Carsharing and ridesharing: As Hercules moves forward in developing the Central Quarter, there is great opportunity to implement supportive policies for its forthcoming transit center. Envisioned as the new home for WestCAT and BART transit providers, the center will be able to provide residents with local service as well as regional connections to San Francisco. Given the proximity of the North Shore Business Park, Transit Demand Programs encouraging carsharing, ridesharing, bike-to-work programs, and transit subsidies have the great potential to be adopted by large employers and reduce the high percentage of single occupancy vehicle use for the area. In this way, the transit center helps to promote some of the City's existing smart growth policies including, "providing effective transit service to the city and the surrounding communities" and "help develop a community that balances housing and job opportunities", eliminating the need for residents to leave the community for retail and service needs.⁴

Unbundling Parking: The opportunity to unbundle parking from development should be explored particularly for developments that are located within walking distance from the future transit center. As Hercules develops, this policy will help to support transit, attracting households that either cannot afford a personal vehicle or choose not to own one. Separating out the cost of parking from residential units makes the cost of housing increasingly affordable. This policy may be particularly beneficial as the City strives to provide increased its affordable housing stock for lower-income residents. Unbundling parking helps to create a more diverse community who studies show are more likely to use public transit given its proximity.⁵

Transportation Demand Management: As demonstrated by the recent Sycamore Downtown Parking Management Plan, there is great potential for the downtown to begin thinking about adopting Transportation Demand Management programs in order to lay the foundation for greater flexibility and transit mode choice for the existing and future residents of the Downtown. As such, we concur with the findings of the 2006 Parking Management and recommend that such programs be pursued and that supportive programs be encouraged for future use.

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⁵ R. Cervero, *Ridership Impacts of Transit Focused Development in California*, Monograph 45 (Berkeley: Institute of Urban and Regional Development, University of California, 1993.) Among those who drove to work when they lived away from transit, 52.3% switched to transit commuting on moving within a ½ mile walking distance of a rail station.